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CIA pay to official is alleged

Salvadoran accused of death-squad ties

By W. Dale Nelson
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A high-ranking Salvadoran police official who has been tied to rightist death squads was paid by the CIA for about five years, according to a U.S. government source. The officer yesterday denied receiving any CIA payment.

The U.S. source, who spoke on condition he not be named, said that the officer, Col. Nicholas Carranza, head of El Salvador's powerful Treasury Police, was paid \$8,000 to \$10,000 a month by the CIA.

The source, who provided no details, had access to material on the CIA's dealings with Carranza that the agency supplied to congressional oversight committees.

The source also was familiar with material provided about Carranza by a former Salvadoran military officer who has been interviewed by several members of Congress and was interviewed Wednesday on "The CBS Evening News."

In that interview, the former Salvadoran officer said Carranza had received up to \$90,000 a year from the CIA. The former officer has been reported as receiving payment from a private Washington group after identifying leaders and members of Salvadoran death squads.

Carranza, interviewed yesterday at his office at Treasury Police headquarters in El Salvador's capital of San Salvador, said he never had received any money from the U.S. government.

Nothing but friendship

"I have never received anything from the Americans except friendship," he said.

Carranza said that he had talked with U.S. Embassy officials and U.S. military officers assigned to the embassy but that he did not know whether any of them worked for the CIA. Carranza said his dealings with the Americans began more than a decade ago.

Speaking in English, he said the allegations were "an attempt to destroy me by means of accusation. My enemies... are trying to make several accusations to destroy my image in El Salvador."

While not specifying who his "enemies" were, he said the attacks were intended to limit his ability "to fight against the terrorists."

He said that in his 10 months as head of the Treasury Police, he has tried to improve its treatment of prisoners. "I have encouraged (the police) to treat them as human beings," he said.

The New York Times reported yesterday that Carranza had been recruited by the CIA in the late 1970s while he was deputy minister of defense to provide information on power struggles within the Salvadoran military and on political and military developments in the country.

The CIA would not acknowledge or deny that Carranza had been on its payroll.

Rep. James Shannon (D. Mass.) pointing to what he called a "dark picture" of U.S. activity in Central America, filed a resolution yesterday asking the CIA to turn over any documents involving Carranza. A spokeswoman for Shannon said his resolution asks the CIA to relinquish the material in the next 14 legislative days.

The former military officer who linked Carranza to death-squad activities also has implicated other top-ranking officials.

D'Aubuisson mentioned

In the CBS interview, the former officer said Roberto d'Aubuisson, right-wing candidate in El Salvador's presidential election on Sunday, had been in charge of the death squads and had taken orders from Carranza.

Asked if the CIA knew of any specific slayings, the former officer, who was filmed in shadows and spoke to correspondent Walter Cronkite through an interpreter, said, "No, I don't think so."

At the White House, deputy press secretary Larry Speakes quoted an executive order that says "no person employed by or acting on behalf of the U.S. government shall engage in or conspire to engage in assassinations."

Speakes said, "The CIA abides by that provision scrupulously and does not employ people whom it believes have been or currently are engaged in assassination activities. Death-squad activities in El Salvador fall within this category of prohibited participation." He said the CIA has testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee that it adheres to the executive order.

The former Salvadoran officer reportedly has been promised \$50,000 and already has received \$29,500 after making the accusations. The payment came from a private, Washington-based organization, the Center for Development Policy, which opposes the Reagan administration's policy in Central America. The center's director, Lindsay Mattison, said the informant is getting the money because he "is a courageous man — risking death for himself and endangering his family."

Mattison, who commented after the payment was disclosed, said, "We are optimistic that the Salvadoran officer's revelations will convince the administration and the Congress to investigate these issues more closely and review current U.S. policy."